

Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission
Full Commission Mtg. – Friday, 10 February 2006 at 10:00 a.m.
Dane County Highway Garage, 2302 Fish Hatchery Road, Madison, WI

1. The Chair, Steve Foye, called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

The Commission welcomed new Dane County Commissioner Jim Haefs-Flemming.

2. Roll Call (Commissioners present for all or part of the meeting):

Crawford	2nd VC	Tom	Cornford	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rock (cont)	Sec.	Marshall	Bown	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Ted	Sheckler	<input type="checkbox"/>			William	Agnew	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Ron	Leys	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Phil	Blazkowski	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Dane	Treas.	Forrest	Van Schwartz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sauk	2nd Treas.	Larry	Volz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Gene	Gray	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Robert	Sinklair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Jim	Haefs-Flemming	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Joel	Gaalswijk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Grant	2nd Sec.	Lois	Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walworth	Advocate	Marty	Krueger	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Velma	Weadge	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				vacant	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Marion	Martin	<input type="checkbox"/>			Tim	Buchheit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Iowa	Chair	Steve	Foye	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Waukesha	1st VC	Richard	Kuhnke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Phil	Roberts	<input type="checkbox"/>			Karl	Nilson	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Charles	Anderson	<input type="checkbox"/>			Richard	Manke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rock		Henry	Schoeberle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Robert	Thelen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Others present for all or part of the meeting: Joni Graves (SWWRPC Transportation Planner / WRRTC staff); Jim Matzinger (Dane County CPA / WRRTC staff); Frank Huntington and Roger Larson (WisDOT); Ken Lucht (WSOR); Tom Clauder (City of Fitchburg); and Mike Gracz (Village of Oregon).

3. Motion accepting Graves' certification of public notice / Agnew / Schoeberle / Motion passed unanimously.

4. Motion approving the Agenda / Leys / Gray / Motion passed unanimously.

Van Schwartz said that, as a point of information, he would like to set Friday August 4th for another "Railroad 101" and hoped to get some guest speakers.

5. Approval of revised draft Minutes from 9 Dec 2005 and 6 Jan 2006 XCom mtgs and acceptance of Minutes from the 3 Feb 2006 Mazomanie Sub-Committee / Kuhnke / Cornford / Motion passed unanimously.

6. Resolution confirming the actions of the Exec Committee & Sub-Committees since the Nov 2005 meeting of the full Commission / Manke / Sinklair / Motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS

7. WSOR Monthly Operator's Report – Ken Lucht, WSOR

Lucht reported that the MOW production totals for 2005 were still being tallied and deferred that report until the next meeting. He provided an update on four bridge improvement projects from WSOR's critical conditions list, which would be necessary to keep the bridges in service (but not improved to 286K standards), and talked about planned bridge improvement projects on the Monroe Subdivision and the stone arch structure near Baraboo. WSOR has hired a rail detector car provide independent ultrasonic data on the condition of the rail and, in a 49-mile segment, found 119 bolt-hole joint (BHJ) defects on 90# rail and 63 BHJ defects on 100# rail. He explained that these defects could not be identified with a visual inspection but if they are not repaired, friction eventually causes the bolts to break. A transverse defect is "like a disease that spreads in the body" and testing shows where they are, so the segment can be replaced. WSOR also tested 23 miles in the Horicon area and, in a six-mile segment, there were 56 defects, which WSOR was in the process of repairing. Some are rail defects that were the result of manufacturing techniques in the 1930s. Lucht provided an update on other rehab projects and said that the N Milwaukee-to-Slinger tie replacement project is nearly complete. On the northern division, about six miles of welded rail had been delivered – a project that WSOR was able to add because of the reduction in steel costs. On the southern division, long-deferred work will be done at the Orfordville Hill and the rail has been delivered. MOW plans to install 50,000 ties in 2006 (last year they did 35,000); they have 38,000 ties secured and are working to get 16,000 ties from Amtrak (which is replacing 5-7 year-old ties with concrete in the northeast) and WisDOT has approved re-use of these ties. WSOR is working with Milk Specialties in Boscobel and the company is making rail spur improvements. In Sheboygan, the UP has sent a notice that they plan to reduce service on the line and there is a similar situation in Calumet County. Lucht said he had recently attended a meeting in Cross

Plains, where a recent community plan was presented that includes a long-term goal to add two new public rail crossings; he and Jim Tracy, WisDOT, had expressed several concerns. If pursued, a decision would be made by the OCR. The Village is also interested in some park development and Lucht and Tracy had provided information on the proposed Mazomanie project and the requirements there.

8. WisDOT Report – Frank Huntington and Roger Larson, WisDOT.

Huntington said WisDOT had received about 16 applications for the loan program (from nine applicants) which totaled approximately \$8.3M. The grant program received six applications (from three applicants - WSOR, Escanaba, and Progressive Rail). WSOR's applications included a project on the Avalon-to-Walworth; acquisition in the Sheboygan Falls area; and a match for the Prairie du Chien line (if federal funds are allocated for the project). He explained that WisDOT does not have enough money to fund all of these applications. Regarding the Watertown Line, Huntington said WisDOT had recently learned that the STB had identified one more issue, which WisDOT can address under the Commission's action in December, and the changes – a clarification of the language related to passenger service – would be reviewed by the Commission's staff and attorney.

9. Staff Report – Joni Graves, SWWRPC / WRRTC staff

Graves and Commissioner Kuhnke provided an update on the status of the Walworth County vacancy. Graves reported that Forrest Van Schwartz and Gene Gray had volunteered to be the Commission's representatives to the Railroad Coordinating Committee.

Motion appointing Forrest Van Schwartz and Gene Gray to fill the Commission's two vacancies on the Railroad Coordinating Committee / Kuhnke / Cornford / Motion passed unanimously.

Graves had provided revised text for the draft Commissioner "job description," using input from Commissioners, and the result was hailed as "good stuff" and "well done."

Motion adopting the February 2006 text of the "job description" for Commissioners, which provides Commission background and summarizes the responsibilities of Commissioners / Gray / Gaalswijk / Motion passed unanimously.

Graves distributed an updated version of the survey results from County Clerks summarizing each County's policy related to per diem and mileage reimbursement. Foye referenced the action taken by the Commission at its January 2006 meeting, which authorized the WRRTC to pay per diem as a last resort if a County would not pay, and said the Commission will follow these guidelines. Graves said there was no update on the Spring Grove property but she would be seeking information, related to the option of taking the building down, for the Commission's consideration. Copies of the most recent website statistics report for the Commission's website www.wrrtc.com were handed out.

10. Financials & Contracts Report – Jim Matzinger, Dane County / WRRTC staff.

2006 Budget: Matzinger provided an update on the Commission's budget for 2006, which reflected the \$8,000 contributed by the member Counties towards insurance; updated lease information; and administrative funds that WisDOT has approved for Commission's managing a rehab projects, noting that it was "roughly a break even budget."

Motion accepting the revised 2006 WRRTC budget / Gray / Sinklair / Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Matzinger distributed and summarized the January 2006 Treasurer's Report, He said he would be providing invoices for the 2006 funding request, noting that some counties had funds in reserve with the Commission that they could apply.

Motion accepting the January 2006 Treasurer's Report, as presented / Sinklair / Kuhnke / Motion passed unanimously.

Bills Received: Matzinger explained that EWCRC had submitted another invoice for the 2005 project and Graves distributed two spreadsheets which illustrated the existing EWCRC funding gap for the project. Van Schwartz asked, "What railroad fairy was going to make up the difference and pay the bills?" Matzinger explained that WSOR is implicitly taking on the risk. Lucht agreed, explaining that WSOR's work schedule and the state's budgeting schedule have not been in sync, although it is better now that WisDOT has moved its application deadline up to February 1st. He explained that although WRRTC had been able to adjust when WisDOT approved the change in scope for the 2005 project, in response to market forces. This revised scope of work had increased project costs, but EWCRC had remained at a \$15K contribution / County because it was mid-year in the budget cycle. He said there was also a need for ongoing education, noting that EWCRC has had two new Counties join

and that the Commission itself has a different history than WRRTC's longstanding involvement in rail projects. Lucht noted, as an aside, that at about the same time that the cost-sharing initiative was launched, EWCRC had contributed \$100K to a bridge project in their region and \$25K for ballast used in Cambria. In response to further questions, Lucht said WSOR would continue to work with EWCRC and options are being considered to address the funding gap. Lucht agreed that WRRTC and PRTC have contributed their share and it will be WSOR's role to work with EWCRC to resolve this. Foye said that in the future, there needs to be some kind of written agreement, and cut off further discussion to return to the matter of paying the bills. Graves asked that the Commission clarify its position, since the consensus seemed to be that WRRTC should not pay more than its committed 10% share towards the project rehab bills, and asked if this represented the official position of the Commission.

Motion to pay the bills as presented, but to not exceed WRRTC's share of the project rehab costs / Gray / Weadge / Matzinger asked if the Commission intended to pay its 2005 rehab project funds to a zero balance and not contribute any more money to the project / **the Motion was clarified, by consensus, to indicate that the Commission will not fund more than its 10% share of the 2005 project costs, using funds allocated for the project, and will not draw on reserve funds or funds allocated for the 2006 rehab project / Motion passed unanimously.**

Financial Audits: Matzinger reported that the 2004 Audit was virtually finished but he and Huntington were not done with the process of valuing rail assets going back to 1980. Action on the 2005 Audit was deferred to the next meeting.

COMMISSION BUSINESS & PROPERTY ISSUES

11. Prairie du Chien appropriations funding application (FFY 2007) – Graves and Lucht

Graves and Lucht reported on their work drafting the Commission's proposal for federal funding for work on the Prairie du Chien line, which was submitted to Senator Herb Kohl's office. Lucht said this would be a truly regional project.

12. February 24th – 66-Committee meeting

The Committee – and any Commissioners who wish to attend – will learn about WSOR's proposed project plans and discuss the next budget request cycle. Graves distributed a draft "process matrix" that may be useful for coordinating across the three participating Commissions.

13. Fitchburg / Oregon Rail Line Project - Request for Letter of Support

Tom Clauder, Mayor - City of Fitchburg, and Mike Gracz, Administrator - Village of Oregon, provided background and explained that the Village of Oregon has approved a project that will result in the resumption of freight rail service on the line. On February 14th, the City of Fitchburg votes on whether to enter into a joint industrial park project with the Village of Oregon, which would provide additional site access along the rail corridor.

Motion authorizing Graves to send a letter to the City of Fitchburg expressing WRRTC's support for the joint business park and the resumption of rail service / Haefs-Flemming / Gray / Motion passed unanimously.

14. Update / Public Comment re Removal / Relocation of Rail Spur in Mazomanie – Foye, Gray, Van Schwartz

Van Schwartz summarized the February 3rd meeting and the status of the project. Leys said "They should strike a medal and pin it on you guys for the progress that's been made in coming to an agreement." Foye noted there were still details to be worked out, but that several parties had made commitments and it's in the Village of Mazomanie's hands now.

15. The meeting adjourned by acclamation at 12:18 p.m.